

**Notes from Meeting with the Los Angeles County Farm Bureau
Draft Farmworker Housing Ordinance
June 23, 2009**

Attendees: Laura Blank (Executive Director, Los Angeles County Farm Bureau); Connie Chung (DRP); and Anne Russett (DRP)

On June 23, 2009, the staff met with Laura Blank, the Executive Director of the Los Angeles County Farm Bureau, in order to address her concerns and answer her questions regarding the draft farmworker housing ordinance and background report.

The staff provided Ms. Blank with an overview and background of the project, which included an explanation of the Los Angeles County Housing Element, the State Housing Element Law, and the State Employee Housing Act. The staff also explained that the intent of the draft ordinance is to clarify the requirements of the Employee Housing Act. The staff further explained that the draft ordinance does not require farmers and growers to provide housing to their employees, but rather streamlines the land use permitting process for individuals interested in providing housing to farmworkers.

Ms. Blank outlined specific concerns related to infrastructure availability, recreational vehicles, parking standards, lot size requirements and setback requirements. The staff informed Ms. Blank that the Department of Public Works and/or the State would ensure the availability of adequate infrastructure for future farmworker housing projects. In addition, the staff clarified that the ordinance requires applicants to obtain all applicable permits from the County Departments of Public Works, Public Health, Fire, and the State Department of Housing and Community Development.

Ms. Blank correctly pointed out that the Los Angeles County zoning code does not allow recreational vehicles for human habitation. The staff explained that the Employee Housing Act provides an exception for farmworker housing.

The staff also explained that farmworker housing is subject to all applicable setbacks, lot sizes must be consistent with Title 22, and the current parking standards required for residential land uses apply. The staff also mentioned that the draft ordinance includes parking standards for farmworker housing complexes provided in group living quarters and that the Regional Planning Commission requested the staff to further explore parking options and reductions for farmworker housing.

In addition, the staff informed Ms. Blank that restricting the occupancy to farmworkers and their immediate family, as she suggested, would be inconsistent with Federal and State Fair Housing Laws.

Since the ordinance is implementing the State Law, the staff also explained that there is little room for flexibility. For example, the staff cannot change the ordinance language to only allow farmworker housing on-site or to limit the housing to farmworkers working on that property. Such changes would be inconsistent with State Law. Ms. Blank, however, argued that farmworker housing as a goal should be located in close proximity to the agricultural operation to reduce commute times, as well as commuting costs. The staff agreed to incorporate this jobs/housing balance goal into the draft ordinance's implementation guidelines or the General Plan Update.

Lastly, Ms. Blank had a couple of comments on the background report, which the staff will address through a few minor edits. She also indicated that the draft ordinance was not very user-friendly. To address this, the staff committed to working with Ms. Blank to develop implementation guidelines upon adoption of the ordinance.